



Abstract from Article

JOHN KNOX AND THE COVENANT TRADITION

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Abstract

Modern scholarship on John Knox has tended to ignore his development of the covenant concept and his place in the covenant tradition. This is especially surprising because of the significance of the covenant idea for the seventeenth-century Scottish history. The covenant, moreover, became a basic theme of English and American Puritan thought in the century following Knox's death. During the early years of the formulation of the covenant concept in English Puritanism, Knox was a revered figure. Following his various preaching activities in Edwardian England and his association with English exiles on the Continent during Mary's reign, he continued to maintain his interest in and contact with English Protestants, even while playing a major role in the establishment of the Reformed faith in Scotland. In 1568-9, for example, he was called upon to give advice respecting the question of separation from the Church of England. It is, thus, quite possible that his views on the covenant influenced English Puritan thought, as well as the thought of the Scottish Protestants. A study of Knox's views on the covenant is also important because of the place of the covenant in the development of his position on the legitimacy of active rebellion against tyrannical, idolatrous sovereigns. Finally, an examination of Knox's covenant thought is significant because it reveals that he was not as independent as John Calvin as has been commonly supposed. The covenant (or its synonyms band and league) was not treated systematically by Knox in his writings, but its development and application to technology and politics can be traced.

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